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Editorial

Robin Skeates
The General Editor
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This is the fourth issue of the *European Journal of Archaeology* for 2013. Here, you will find six general articles and twelve reviews. Below, I summarize and assess their significance to European archaeology.

Stašo Forenbaher, Timothy Kaiser and Preston Miracle present a series of new high-quality radiocarbon determinations from Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper Age contexts at ten sites in the East Adriatic. With the help of this improved chronological framework, and of Bayesian modelling, they question the continued usefulness of the division of the East Adriatic Neolithic into ‘Early’, ‘Middle’ and ‘Late’ phases. They also reconsider the development of Neolithic pottery styles in the region, models of the spread of farming and other features of Neolithic life, and the duration of the East Adriatic Neolithic – which they place between around 6000 and 4000 cal BC. Overall, this new dataset and its critical evaluation set the standard for the establishment of more secure absolute chronological frameworks throughout Central Mediterranean prehistory.

Leonardo García Sanjuán and his international team of collaborators describe the results of their scientific analyses of some of the ivory artefacts found in a megalithic funerary structure at the Copper Age site of Valencina de la Concepción near Seville. These objects include an unworked elephant tusk, a carved vessel, a carved elephant tusk, a carved dagger hilt, and a carved plaque or sheath. The authors also discuss these objects’ significance in relation to on-going debates about craft specialization, long-distance trade and social complexity in Copper Age southern Iberia (c. 3200-2200 cal BC). They argue that ivory – from both African and Asian elephants – was worked at Valencina by highly skilled local craftspersons specializing in ivory work, and that the finished luxury objects found in the main tomb chamber were associated with a high-status individual – perhaps a craftsman, middle-man or merchant connected to the ivory trade. This is an important paper, particularly because it combines details of these stunning new ivory artefacts with an up-to-date synthesis of other ivory material published in a variety of languages.

Andy M. Jones (not to be confused with Andrew Meirion Jones, whose book on the rock art of Kilmartin in Scotland is reviewed in this issue of the *EJA*) and Graeme Kirkham consider the cup-marks found on rock art in south-west Britain, especially in Cornwall. In contrast to the complex motifs found on rock art in northern Britain and in Irish passage graves, the authors compare the simple south-western cup-marks to examples found in western France, Wales and south-west Ireland. They also propose a chronology for the cup-marks from south-west Britain, originating in the Early Neolithic in chambered tombs and on natural rock outcrops (possibly in association with the spread of chambered tombs in Atlantic Europe), then continuing in the second millennium BC as powerful ‘ancient’ symbols incorporated within Early Bronze Age barrows and cairns and at Middle Bronze Age roundhouses and settlements. This careful study and contextualisation of a relatively overlooked regional tradition of rock art are welcome contributions to both British and Atlantic European rock art studies.

Maria Lahtinen and Peter Rowley-Conwy critically review (one might even say ‘demolish’) the palynological evidence for the earliest agriculture in Finland. They argue that claims of agriculture in the Late Neolithic (Corded Ware culture) and Bronze Age should be dismissed, since they are based upon the misidentification of a very few ‘early cereal-type’ pollen grains, which may actually derive from large-grained wild grasses. Instead, they suggest that cultivation of cereals in Finland could have begun as late as the start of the Iron Age (c. 500 BC). As the authors note, this critical perspective has implications for claims of early agriculture in other parts of Europe, which must be based on a variety of lines of evidence.

Peter Skoglund draws upon recent developments in the relative dating of ship images in Scandinavian rock art to reconsider the chronology of the important Järrestad rock art panel in south-east Sweden. Here, he argues, motifs such as ships, axes, a warrior and horse-riders, as well as less chronologically-diagnostic foot images and cup-marks, were produced in two phases: from the beginning of the Bronze Age (c. 1700-1100 BC), and especially in the earlier part of the pre-Roman Iron Age (c. 900-200 BC) when the iconography of the rock art and the organization of the surrounding landscape were affected by the broader European Hallstatt culture. This is an original and persuasive analysis, which demonstrates that it is possible to work from an in-depth exploration of the local chronology of one (albeit large) rock art site to discussions of interactions in Europe.

Andres Dobat reviews the current status of liberally-managed metal detector archaeology in Denmark. Thirty years after its inception, it remains a popular, legal, generally responsible, and useful form of amateur archaeological activity, rather than the major threat to cultural heritage it has become in other parts of the world. Dobat ascribes the relative success of the liberal Danish model to a quite specific combination of factors (legal, administrative, archaeological, cultural, social and economic). Nevertheless, he suggests that it should still serve as a source of inspiration in other countries where the alternative prohibition model has been less successful. At the very least, this is a constructive contribution to the long-running and often heated debate concerning archaeologists’ relations with metal detector users.

In the reviews section, there are discussions of fifteen new books of significance to European archaeology. We begin with an evaluation of Martin Carver’s manifesto for field archaeology in the UK, then follow it with the latest book by archaeological theorist Gavin Lucas, whose consideration of the relationship between archaeological methods and archaeological theories of materiality and agency might not please Carver but actually does win some praise from the perspective of an American behavioural archaeologist. The next three books all share an interest in the dynamics of material culture, but with differing emphases on cultural variability and transmission, social interaction and networks, and on technological change and innovation. There follows praise for John Bintliff’s achievement of the seemingly impossible task of writing ‘The Complete Archaeology of Greece’. Next we turn to a series of more specialised yet still wide-ranging books dealing with: human responses to climate change during the Younger Dryas; funerary practices in Iberian prehistory; Scottish rock art; landscape, ethnicity and identity in the Archaic period Mediterranean; and people and places in the Middle Ages. We then end with an overview of a new biography of Champollion, whose achievements as the ‘father of Egyptology’ are reconsidered in context.

If you are interested in submitting an article on any aspect of European archaeology, or have recently published a book that you would like us to review, or have a suggestion for a special issue of the *EJA*, do please get in touch with a member of our editorial team or visit us on <http://www.maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/eja/>.